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Bishop of Bloemfontein

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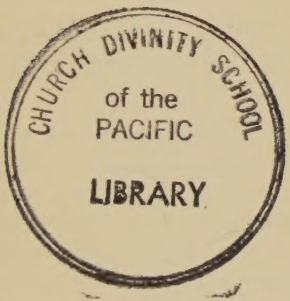

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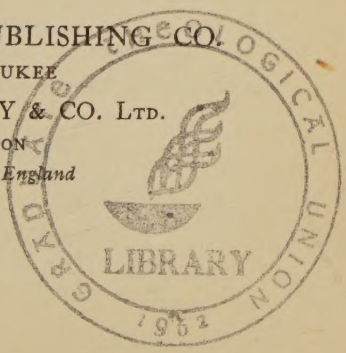

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PREFACE

THE Gospel of Jesus Christ is the proclamation of a rescue of human beings who have lost their way to God and are in prison.

All else is subsidiary. Philanthropy, education, science, dogma, the Church, the Incarnation itself, are only assistant and subsidiary to one great end, viz. to re-establish human beings who are capable of God into a union with Him which they have lost but can regain. Such union connotes happiness, joy, peace, tranquillity. Knowledge, intellect, art, philosophy are in no way disparaged; they are discoveries of God's truth, but they are not in themselves sufficient. They may be attained and yet leave the personality unsatisfied and the life indifferent or evil.

The immediate origin of this little book was a mission at Capetown. There the thesis of this book was expounded as the backbone of the mission. It was stimulated very largely by the Dean of Chester's book, *The Resurrection of the Dead*,[1] to which, and to its author, I owe the deepest debt of gratitude; in fact my main object is to continue and spread the thesis he expounds.

[1] Chapman & Hall. 5*s*.

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The argument of that book, as of mine, is that people to-day do not think in terms of dogma primarily, but of science. Religion need not suffer for that. The discoveries of biology are not hostile to theology but illuminate it. It is for biologists and anthropologists to discover the facts of the origin and development of early man, while philosophers and theologians (as Dr. E. O. James says) have the task of interpreting those facts in the highest terms of spiritual reality.

Biology, then, does not supersede theology, but it throws a new light on it. It gives reasons and data which illuminate the conclusions of theology. If the argument of this book is sound, it throws a light on the fact that nothing in this world is perfect, and that, as men rise in the spiritual scale, the world becomes increasingly unsatisfactory—shot through with disappointment, frustration, and futility; while, on the other hand, a converted Christian is conscious of a freedom, a worth-while-ness in life, of quite a different character from anything found in the life of the world.

That malaise, that disappointment with life which is so characteristic of, e.g., Thomas Hardy, John Galsworthy, H. G. Wells, and many another, is perfectly true and justified as a reflection on the world *as it is*. The whole question is whether there is a way of rescue of which they are not aware. We say that there is, and that Mr. H. G. Wells in his very wonderful story,

The Door in the Wall, has indicated both the unsatisfactoriness of the world and the way of escape —but he has not known, as yet, that it is in Christ that such a way of escape into such a very garden as he describes is open to all to-day. Some people have gone through the door, and although there are parts of the garden they will not explore till after death, yet what they have already seen lays on them an obligation to confess to all and sundry the disappointingness of this world, the insufficiency of both nature and ourselves, but also the way of rescue effected by Christ.

This, e.g., explains the life-work of S. Paul This rescue, this Gospel, must be proclaimed 'Woe is me if I preach not the Gospel.' It is no Gospel of smugness, nor of respectability, still less of criticism and controversy. It is 'good news' for discontented, unhappy, disappointed people; for sick in body and mind; for sinners and all who are conscious of ideals betrayed or unfulfilled— that there is a rescue accomplished; an old world to transcend, a new world to find; an old Adam to desert, a new Adam to enter; an old unhappiness to shed, and a new life of joy, peace, power, and love to possess and enjoy.

This is the Gospel. Not a question of mere orthodox belief, but the being filled with a new power and joy and tranquillity.

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Evolution and Redemption

CHAPTER I

BIOLOGY AND THEOLOGY

UP till quite recently the subject matter of religion has been dealt with in the language of theology. Thus, God created man able to know Him and serve Him ; but man fell, rebelled, and so became a sinner and a lost soul. Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, and made a sacrifice and atonement so that all who believed in Him should be saved and reconstituted in God.

Now all this I steadfastly believe, although some queer notions and interpretations have crept into the old theology. For instance, Genesis i–xi has been taken as literal history, although I suppose that nearly all of us who are not fundamentalists believe that the Jews started—or meant to start—literal history with Abraham, but finished off their account of the people of Israel by a preface which described, as they gathered from the hypotheses current in their day, the origin of the

world and of man, and man's sinfulness and misfortunes. For them it was truth as they thought it to be. For us it is inspired allegory—deeply true in its lesson and in the picture-forms of that day, but inspired allegory in its setting and details. There crept in also (I am told that S. Augustine is largely responsible) the idea that Adam and Eve were created (or evolved) as perfect. Their knowledge of God was so clear-sighted and vivid that the Fall was a crime which deserved eternal deprivation and loss. And not only so, but their crime involved their hapless descendants in a loss which, for us people who know the ignorance and helplessness of man, seems so legal and forensic as to be entirely improbable, if it is a sentence delivered by a judge upon each successive generation of human beings.

I was taught, when young, by a clergyman that, inasmuch as sin was a crime against an infinite Being, sin was infinite in its guilt, and demanded an infinite penalty, i.e. hell. All this legal and forensic stuff leaves us absolutely cold to-day.

Adam and Eve, if you mean by that 'man as he became self-conscious and aware of a choice between right and wrong,' were never perfect. Man was innocent in so far as he had never before been aware of right and wrong, and so had never sinned. But the sin of man was not a fall from a height of perfection, but a swerving from the road of upward ascent. It carried with it the consequences of an ideal perceived and betrayed ;

but it was an ideal perceived on the way up to God, not an ideal once fully realized and completely fulfilled, and then rejected.

And again, all picture-thinking which describes the Atonement in terms of an angry Father and a placating Son is obsolete. God is indeed the Judge eternal, but the Judge is also the Atoner and the Saviour, through and in the Son with Whom He is one.

God could hardly be angry with Himself, although He must be wholly averse from, and contradictory to, sinful wills. But He was never angry with the Son. So the legal fiction whereby the Father transfers the merits of the Son Whom He has punished to sinners who are redeemed by the legal transference of their sin to the Saviour, and by the transference of their Saviour's merits to them, means nothing to us.

The truth is that, by some writers, the attitude of God to sinners and the plight of sinners to God has been pictured in legal terms. That there is ground for this in Scripture nobody could deny : the Son of Man seated on the throne of His glory with the sheep and the goats marshalled before Him implies a Judge and a judgement. But when the whole process of salvation is pictured throughout in legal procedure we revolt. Legal fictions, and the frequent victory of legalism over equity, dispose us to regard the exclusive and dominant use of legal terms and forms with grave suspicion. We no longer think

in this sort of picture-making. We think in terms of life : evolving life ; arrested life ; thwarted life ; restored life ; new life and vitality must be actual, realized, lived out, not imputed or legally attributed.

But it is probably better just to state the new point of view. Otherwise I shall be involved in controversy as to the amount of truth—and there is much—in the old picture-making. It is not that I dispute the great amount of truth underlying the old terminology ; it is that we don't think in those terms to-day. I would supplement, present a new angle of vision, illuminate with a new ray, rather than deny or dispute the presentations of the past when men thought and taught theologically or legally rather than biologically.

CHAPTER II

THE RISE OF MAN TO SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS AND CONSCIENCE

LET us begin with the subject matter of evolution, i.e. life. What connects pre-living matter with life we do not know at present. Nor do we know all about evolution : its steady progress, its jumps, its deteriorations. Where microbes come into the picture I don't know, I am waiting to learn. But we are dealing with the evolution of man, and we start with the rough stuff of life : matter with life and possibilities ; the ' fountain of change ' (J. Arthur Thomson), or ' the ocean of possibilities,' as I prefer to picture it.

Scientists tell us of these early forms of life, the amoeba and so on, developing in estuaries and warm creeks and gradually evolving from a homogeneity into a heterogeneity, or—in easier terms —starting simple and all alike, and growing into more complex and differentiated forms.

Within this mass of early life were all the possibilities of the future ; but certainly nobody could have guessed it in those early days ; nobody

could have contemplated that (as we say) out of this welter of lowliness there were meant to emerge (under God's guidance) free human spirits whose end was before the throne and within the life of God.

We must picture, then, how this evolving life gradually ascended, like the Atlantic washing up the Bristol Channel to the walls of the City of Bristol : the mainstream flowing unchecked, but breaking off at intervals into creeks and backwaters.

So life evolved towards God ; the mainstream flowing unchecked, but breaking out (and meant to break out) into innumerable species which each turned off into its own predestined backwater. Thus the insects broke off from the mainstream and became and remain insects. The fish—at one time the highest evolved creature—became fish and remain fish. Horses, birds, monkeys, took their way into their still-remaining backwaters, and there they will always be while the world lasts.

But the mainstream flowed up and on towards true man : *homo sapiens.* And then at long last emerges man : ignorant, dimly lighted, with everything to learn, but with self-consciousness, and above all with conscience ; some sense of right and wrong ; some vague consciousness of duty ; some intuition of what we now call God.

We are content to let the terms Adam and Eve

stand, if we agree to let them stand for man and woman grown self-conscious and with a conscience, however dim. The first great stage is over, the miracle accomplished. From the swarming animalculae of x million years ago there has come into actual being *homo sapiens*. He is still in the mainstream of evolution. Dim and dull as he is, he has not yet refused or failed to climb the upward path.

Now at last, for the first time, he must co-operate with the intuitively felt purpose of creation, with the will of the Creator. No longer is his path solely determined by predestination. He has some choice now in his own future. He must co-operate with the Force and Will that has made him. It may look like a tiny step in either direction, upwards or sideways or downwards, but on this first step of his conscience depends the direction that his future will take.

It is a surpassing drama centreing round this dim creature. Will he, can he, still rise? Will he co-operate with the Power that made him, for the last stretch which leads to the heart of God? Or will he decline the challenge, and turn aside into a backwater not intended for him? Will he swerve aside, out of the mainstream for which he was intended, into a backwater of arrest, of frustration, and therefore of darkness and comparative atrophy and loss?

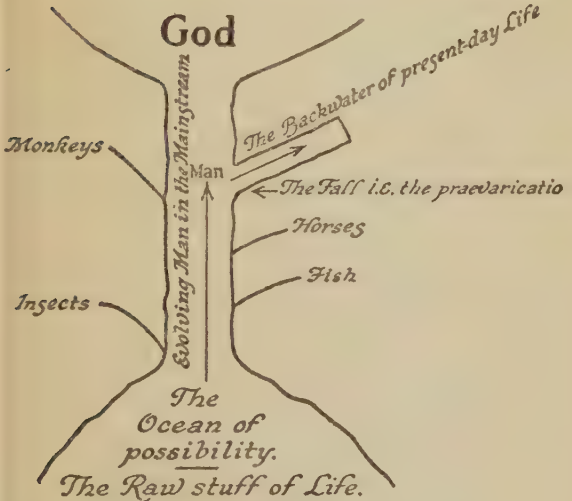
He demands our compassion. What dark forces may surround him! What evil wills from some

older creation, bent on marring the work and love of God !

But, anyway, here he is, the product of millions of years of evolving life. He stands at the cross-roads, what will he do ?

CHAPTER III

THE MAINSTREAM AND THE BACKWATER



IN books of biology to-day (such as Dr. E. O. James's[1]) you will find pictures and diagrams such as the above. They go into much detail,

[1] *The Beginnings of Man.*

tracing out the lines of the various races and families of mankind.

My diagram is a similar attempt to show how mainstream man evolved until he reached a point where his co-operation was needed, where choice began, with the consequence that he would either continue upwards by fidelity to the highest instincts he knew, or whether by refusing or rebelling against those instincts he would himself, like innumerable species before him, enter into a backwater, and so stultify his meaning and destiny, and enter into partial atrophy and darkness ending in the futility of a destiny unaccomplished and frustrated.

The Bible doctrine of the Fall is the effort to describe, in such terms as the Jews knew, the fact and the tragedy that man had known the right and chosen the wrong, and by so doing had lost his true life and destiny.

I don't think we need linger over the actual description or details of the Fall story. The genius who wrote it did his best. To him it may have seemed true in detail, or at least was the best picture he could give. We, at this date, do not think of a completely civilized and awake-to-God man and woman. We do not make history of a conversation between a woman and a serpent. Nor do we see God bodily walking in a garden and talking to Adam as two friends have a talk under shady trees; these things are an allegory. We see man become self-conscious,

knowing for the first time the consciousness of some choice between a higher and a lower, able to visualize in some way the claims on him of a Creator. The serpent we can understand because we know him ourselves : the pull of the lower against the higher : the very real evil Will that dogs our footsteps.

What the actual temptation or occasion was, we don't know ; it is very idle to speculate ; all we do know is that there was a turning aside, a *praevaricatio*, from the mainstream into a backwater, and that this is certain partly because of the immensely widespread sense of sin and failure which is found in mankind, but also because of the great unhappiness and sense of uneasiness in this world which is common to man and increasingly so with spiritual man.

I think this latter fact is of enormous significance. All other species seem content enough in their backwater. Left alone they seem happy enough. Man, and man only, is miserable in his environment ; is never truly contented after the halcyon days of youth are over—and often not then. The world is out of joint ; he knows it, he would put it right, but he can't. He beats his wings, he travails and is heavy-laden. Why ? Because he is where he is never meant to be ; he is in the backwater and not in the mainstream.

CHAPTER IV

THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE BACKWATER

IF this picture-thinking is true then certain consequences will be certain. We have to face the fact that when any species leaves the mainstream and goes down into a backwater, it can never return.

The law of non-reversibility holds sway over those side-roads down which any species has gone. Once a fish always a fish; once a bird always a bird. Turtles indeed have tried to go back to the sea, but they have to come to land to lay their eggs; just as whales are compelled to come to the surface to breathe and so, in increasing numbers, to die.[1] So man, when he entered the backwater which we call human life, as we know it, may grow civilized or uncivilized, but he can never get back into the mainstream and proceed direct to the God Who is the ultimate end of the whole mainstream process.

The longing for purification and perfection that still haunts the heart of man will never lead

[1] For this paragraph see J. Arthur Thomson, *Science and Religion*, pp. 141–144.

to anything by any paths which backwater-men think out of their own resources. Thus Communism, which thinks that by changing the environment of life it can change human life for the better and lead humanity to perfection, is deceived. You can alter our common enemy, human selfishness, by changing men, but not simply by changing their circumstances.

But it is not only Communism, which at least has had glimpses of idealism, that makes this mistake. No one standing in the bath, can lift the bath. You can civilize the backwater, alter its proportions and colour, but you can never make it anything except the backwater. It will never yield peace, freedom, rightness with God.

The law of non-reversibility applies here too : the world will always be the world ; the backwater will be the backwater and behave in its disappointing backwater way. The haunting strains of far-off mainstream life will still sound in the ears of men, but of themselves they can do nothing which brings peace, perfection, satisfaction.

It is difficult for us who have two thousand years of Christianity behind us to realize this truth, for Christianity has done much, as will be explained later. But it is worth stressing that, apart from God, nothing will ever be done in the backwater which brings any lasting amelioration.

Our hope is in God alone, for the very simple reason that, apart from Him, the backwater will

and can never be anything else than itself, in the last analysis disappointing, wearying, despairing. Any reform of man which is consciously without God is doomed to failure. As far as it relies on God without knowing His Name, it may do good ; but if we can imagine efforts to improve the race, or to make man happy, which are in defiance of the will of God, then those efforts must be futile.

It simply is so, and must be so, if life is a backwater which has missed the way to God and so to happiness.

This explains a great deal in regard to the small results of much fuss in human affairs. The fuss is made ; the waters of the backwater stir for a moment ; nothing happens, and the backwater remains exactly what it is, a backwater.

Nor does one see any backwater prospects. Like the Dean of Chester, I see no reason to think that people who die in the backwater and belong to the backwater by their life and interests should suddenly enter eternal life just because they die. I see nothing in the ways of the world to make me think it can suddenly blossom into eternal life and joy. Why should it ? It seems much more likely that those who are of the world and like it to be so, should be in great danger of missing the destiny which is proper to the mainstream alone.

I expect they would say so themselves if they faced it. If one said to a man whose sole idea was money or popularity or sinful pleasure, 'Where

is your life heading to?' I expect the answer would be, 'I don't know and I don't care.' I doubt whether a claim to eternal life would ever be made by a really worldly person. Such a man would hope for extinction, not without qualms lest survival might mean suffering or despair or loss. I don't see why we should mock them by pretending that the backwater can give happiness here or hereafter.

Nor should we be too surprised and disappointed if the world continues to show this taint in everything. The backwater, as I keep saying, will never, by itself, act in any other than in a mixed, i.e. backwater, way. We get disappointed in the Press; we get disillusioned with politics; we are sad at the way the Church, as an organization, often behaves; we are surprised at human selfishness. But why should we be so? The worldly world will always be worldly; selfishness and greed will always taint unregenerate society. I don't despair of humanity, for there is a way out of it all; but I do truly despair of unregenerate humanity; for I see no way out for it, out of the malaise and stain of the world except the one way: the only hope, when men and women change from the way of the backwater into Him Who is 'the Way, the Truth, and the Life.' Till then disillusionment; and indeed what else do we expect?

CHAPTER V

THE OPENING OF THE PRISON

WHEN you thoroughly despair of the world, that is, of its being regenerated by its own unaided efforts, then you know where you are. At least you have got to the bottom of this particular line of thought. Regeneration of the world by legislation, ethical societies, birth control, easy divorce, political systems and combinations, or any other nostrum just won't come off. It's like the swimming pool at my feet, people keep jumping in but when the splash is over all remains the same.

I think it's such a relief to be an entire pessimist over the power of the world to regenerate itself. And it is an even greater relief to see why. The backwater can't un-backwater itself, and never will be able to do so. Rescue must come from outside, not inside. Our hopes must be with God, not with man. And our hopes must be miraculous in the sense that what saves the world cannot be derived from the world. Something has got to come into the backwater that isn't of the backwater.

That is why, to me, attempts to equate Christ

with Mohammed or any fallen child of man seem to me so futile. The backwater won't be redeemed by a backwater man. We believe that God, the author of the whole process of creation by evolution, loved us enough to reverse His whole method whereby a species once diverted into a backwater can never find a way back. God reversed the non-reversible by coming Himself into the whole process in Jesus Christ His Son, the Word of God, by Whom all things were made.

And God's purpose was that Christ should be born into the world at the point where Adam (self-conscious man) had swerved aside. Christ was born into the Mainstream, born of a Virgin by the operation of the Holy Ghost, and resumed, as the Head of a regenerate humanity, that mainstream line of approach to God from which Adam had swerved into the backwater.

If I may mix my metaphors, Christ picked up the threads of mainstream life dropped by Adam at the swerving-aside, and built them up again into a mainstream life which should not swerve but should continue upwards to God. Truly the Son of God to redeem, but truly Son of Man ; Mainstream Man ; living His life not in mainstream conditions, but coming by an act of will into the backwater, there to live the mainstream life in backwater conditions.

There, in the backwater, He had to re-create the mainstream life ; there He was tried, tempted,

threatened, betrayed, crucified, killed. Yet at every point, and in response to every fresh challenge, He maintained and built up the mainstream life in spite of all the backwater—and the evil wills behind the backwater—could do to check Him, spoil Him, ruin Him.

But His mainstream obedience held to the end ; not for a second did He follow the old Adam into rebellion or fault. He lived the mainstream life even amid the backwater, and so recovered for mankind the way of escape back into the mainstream and so to God.

For God raised Him from the dead, restored to Him all that mainstream life possessed of triumph and ultimate glory, and He has passed back to His Father as Mainstream Man in glory, carrying with Him all of us who—through faith in Him and incorporation with Him—have thrown in our lot with Him and belong entirely to Him.

It is Christ Who by living the mainstream life has recovered it for us by union with Himself. Henceforth the gate is open out of the backwater; we can escape out of it when we like, for if we are in Him we have already in spirit passed out of its power. We are no longer backwater men and women ; we are mainstreamers in Christ ; back on the old main line of evolution ; back in the old promises and powers of ascent to God. We have done with the backwater ; we hate it with all the hatred of the escaped prisoner for

the prison. Our spirits are already free in Christ, and our bodies will, in some way, follow one day.

Meanwhile our energies burn within us to rescue our fellow-captives : to get them to understand ; to persuade them to cast off their chains, and with Christ to re-enter the mainstream and so resume humanity's true evolution and ascent to God.

Why do I think all this a true picture ? Experience ; that 's all. I know nothing more remarkable than the contrast I have seen in (I suppose) hundreds of people, before and after their conversion. So very many people, possibly most people, feel so ill at ease in the world. Sickness ; weariness ; frustration ; a sense of something very wrong somewhere. Wars and quarrels and racialisms, class-consciousness and snobbery, unemployment and social evils, sin public and private, all point to something damnably wrong. There 's something very wrong somewhere with human life. It wants a doctor pretty badly.

And then those same people, when truly converted : their overpowering sense of *freedom* ; that always strikes me most. Their sense of escape ; their quiet joy and peace. And then (to my mind so extremely important) their desire to come back and help the other captives. Their efforts for social and material improvement. They cease to hate anybody; they begin to love their fellow man;

they set to work to rescue, save, uplift, cheer up mankind.

Why? Well, you can tell me perhaps, but to me it's no mystery. They are out of the backwater, and in the mainstream with Christ. That is why conversion is always accompanied by that terrific sense of freedom. We are out of the hateful backwater which never was meant for us, where we have always been uneasy, into the great, broad, healthy mainstream of man's true life evolving to God. Around us are the breezes, the sky, the sounds, of the great mainstream. We are free, and therefore we are happy at last. But freedom has come not through improving the backwater but through getting out of it.

I find myself entirely hostile to any theory which minimizes sin and the misery of the backwater, and looks for delivery by a gradual upward rise in the health of the backwater itself.

We are told not to make sin an obsession. We are asked to pare down the miraculous, i.e. the intervention of God from the outside, to as little as the Gospels—well minimized—can be made to permit us to do.

I feel that this is partly due to a theory of God which makes Him the background of everything but the doer of nothing in particular; whereas I believe in the Hebrew conception of God as caring, and loving, and acting, and intervening. But it also arises from a very deficient sense of sin. If sin is only the remnants of aboriginal impotence

and desire, then we might grow out of it under the benign influence of health lectures and sermons emphasizing the beauty of the hills or the loveliness of flowers. But to many of us this is shallow stuff. It seems the philosophy of healthy and well-fed persons who have never been up against things. It seems so untrue to life as we see it : its very awful bereavements and tragedies, its very terrible and heartless brutalities and devilries. I suppose that our theory will be largely the result of our contact with life, but for some of us no theory that says the world is really all right, and its sins are only slips, and that we shall grow out of all that is wrong in time, seems anything less than shallow and ridiculous.

The backwater is tragic ; is full of evil ; is dark ; and though it has relieving spots, it leads nowhere, it denies all real hope. To us the Cross of Christ—i.e. the fact that the redemption of the backwater meant, for Christ, obedience to suffering, agony, and death—gives the lie to any easy theory of a world that isn't half bad after all. All the theology of the ' Blood of Christ,' even if it has been mixed up with crude explanations, yet reveals a mighty truth, i.e. that the world is so wrong that it needed the life and death of Him Who is God and also Mainstream Man to make a way of escape for the world's prisoners.

It is indeed because the backwater is so hopeless to save itself ; it is because its swerving aside, its sin, its doom, is so terribly real, that God had to

intervene if He was to save ; and that saving meant a life lived and a death died, and a resurrection life to be shared.

I find it difficult to swallow my utter repugnance when I strike the sort of religious teaching that says, ' How good life is ; hark at the birds ; the sun is shining ; let us praise God,' unless it really intends to say, ' How good it is to be free in Christ ; hark to the music of the mainstream ; let us praise Him Who lived and died that we might be free from an unregenerate and transgressing world, and put back—in Him—into a regenerated and new life.'

No, for us the world is hopeless in itself ; Christ has done that which unlocks the prison ; in Him we are escaped even as a bird out of the snare of the fowler. He has given light to them that sat in darkness and in the shadow of death, and has guided our feet into the way of peace. Praise be to His Holy Name !

CHAPTER VI

THE HOLY GHOST

CHRIST, our Forerunner, raised from the dead by God, exhibiting all the glory of Mainstream Man in His Ascension to the Father, has gone within the veil. We who wish to escape from the backwater do so by union with Him, Who has assumed mainstream Manhood, won the victory over sin and death in it, and has gone back to the Father's heart and throne.

But how do we get to belong to Him? How do we join up to Him? Do we do it, or does somebody help us to do it?

Of course the answer is, the Holy Ghost. He came, sent by our Forerunner, to take us individually (and collectively as the Church), to knit and rivet us to Himself, i.e. to Christ. The Holy Spirit's work, so often ignored, is simply vital. Without Him, Christ's redemption would have been 'in the air.' The Way would be open, but nobody on it; the price paid, but nobody benefited by it. So the work of the Spirit is to bring Christ to us, and us to Christ. The work of the Spirit is to transfer backwater people into the mainstream by joining them up with the Mainstream Man, Jesus Christ.

How He does it, is to be answered in a series of actions. If we follow the Scriptures we see that He starts His work normally with conversion. The prisoners of the backwater labour and are heavy-laden. They have broken through the surface of life and have found that underneath there is nothing ; nothing that can satisfy the intuitions and longings of an awakened spirit which pants after freedom and joy.

That is the first act of the conversion drama. The sick longing for something better and finer than sin or worldliness can give. And then the Holy Spirit brings the Person and the offers of Christ to such. In the old days there was the witness ; the evident power ; the miracles of the Apostles and others. To-day, we have the portrait in the Gospels ; the power of that portrait ; the witness and experience of the Church (alas ! too often spoilt by unconverted lives within her) ; the power exerted by real Christians, i.e. mainstreamers whose very look is a testimony of the reality of the Christ within : for men will believe on Christ when they see Him in us, not otherwise.

And then comes the conversion of the will : quiet and dutiful, or flaming and sudden, whereby the Holy Spirit has got possession of a surrendered soul. And then follows baptism (according to the Scriptures), whereby the surrendered person is incorporated into Christ and becomes thereby mainstream.

How foolish it is to separate baptism from con-

version ; they are parts of one act. In conversion the Holy Spirit makes a soul ready ; in baptism the person is incorporated into, and joined with, Christ in the fellowship of His Body, the Church of God. Conversion and baptism ; baptism and conversion ; two sides of one act ; both initiated and carried through by the Holy Spirit Who is doing His work of rescuing prisoners and putting them back into the main line of evolution, by incorporation into the new Adam, the new Mainstream Manhood of Jesus Christ.

But the work of the Spirit is not finished by the first act of conversion—baptism. The mainstream man or woman must not only be started but continued. Hence the Holy Spirit has other gifts in store. Some are sacramental, others non-sacramental.

His non-sacramental gifts would include the holy thoughts He suggests ; the sort of people we meet ; the circumstances of life ; the meetings for prayer and praise ; the inner quiet and strength of prayer and contemplation ; the study of the Scriptures. His sacramental gifts, if we follow the Scriptures, are Confirmation, as we see in Acts viii and xix, wherein He gives us the sevenfold gifts of strength and continuance. Then follows Holy Communion : the sacramental feeding upon the Sacrificed Whom we offer to the Father, and then receive as the Food of our souls—living, sacramental, incorporating. Then, if we have fallen back into the backwater through wilful

sin, there is the reinstatement into Christ by the Absolution of the Lord, given by the Spirit through the ministration of the Church, the Spirit-bearing Body.

None of these gifts is man's gift. Nor are they the Church's gift apart from the Lord Who gives, and the Spirit Who applies. The Holy Spirit is behind all—seeking, saving, continuing, taking that which is Christ's and showing and applying it through the Church, as His main organ, to the prisoners. It is He that makes their escape actual by converting them and incorporating them into Christ ; it is He that continues them by His ministry in the Church until their perseverance is final.

It is strange how the work of the Spirit is forgotten or unrealized. In the ascent of man to God the Holy Spirit is the first link of God to men. He takes us, and binds us to Christ. Without Him we should never get to Christ ; there is no bridge but He. And He not only brings us to Christ but keeps us in Christ. And it is only as being in Christ by the binding of the Spirit that we can approach the Father.

To think that we can profitably approach the Father except in the Son, and to think we can be in Christ without the Holy Spirit, is just a mistake. We worship the Father only when in the Son ; we enter the Son only by the binding power and presence of the Spirit. Our prayers which approach the Father direct, and perhaps add a word

or two afterwards to the Son and the Spirit, are theologically all wrong. We must be full of the Spirit to enter the Son : and only in the Son, as incorporated into Him, can we worship the Father in spirit and in truth.[1]

The Hand that lifts us out of the backwater into the Mainstream Christ, is that of the Holy Spirit. Let us never forget it.

[1] Practical suggestions for prayer, showing what the author is convinced is the right line of approach, will be found in the Appendix, pp. 54–6.

CHAPTER VII

THE BRACK

SOME will think that the two conceptions, the mainstream and the backwater, are too violently contrasted. A few people are obviously in the mainstream—S. Peter, S. Paul, S. John, S. Francis, and many saints known and unknown. Life reveals to us—as far as we can judge—some who seem really imbedded in the backwater ; and many of us can say honestly that we have been there ourselves, that we were worldly, of the world, and with the world's standards as our only standards.

S. Paul obviously thinks of this violent contrast, ' If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature,' a complete contrast between ' in Christ ' and ' in the world.' But our difficulty as regards classification is that most people don't seem to be either saints in the mainstream or completely and willingly of the world.

There is a large area in which multitudes live which is neither completely mainstream nor yet completely backwater. There you find what we call bad people doing unexpectedly fine and noble things ; there you find religious people doing mean and little things ; it makes a complete classification impossible.

Our Lord told us not to judge, and that wheat and tares must grow till the harvest ; only God can judge. What we can do, then, is simply to register facts ; that there is a mainstream life to be found in union with Christ, and that ultimately and some time all who want to find God must come into that stream. There is no way to God except in Christ ; but whether any of us are completely in Christ now, and how we shall ultimately come unto Him, and where, nobody can judge. There is also an obvious backwater of worldliness; we can't fail to note the selfishness in ourselves and others ; but what percentage of a man or woman is immersed in that backwater we are unable to judge.

Most of us seem to live in the brack, the halfway house in which we are neither complete mainstreamers nor complete worldlings. All we can say is that it is an imperative duty to get out of the backwater as soon as we can and as completely as we can, for in the mainstream alone is fullness of life and salvation.

And it is also imperatively necessary to say that there seem to be two roads and not one leading from worldliness into Christ. Some talk as if conversion—and by that is meant a sudden, conscious, vivid change of outlook and attitude which happens to so many, e.g. to S. Paul, S. Augustine, S. Francis, Bishop Moorhouse, and to multitudes of others—is the only road.

But there is clearly another road, more gradual,

less vivid, but by no means less true. There is the road of duty done, of light followed, of Christ honoured and revered, of faithfulness to the baptismal grace and covenant. It is the danger of the vividly converted to depreciate the long, dusty, difficult road of duty plainly faced and done, but illuminated by no special vision or cataclysm.

If these two facts are borne in mind—(1) the unclassifiable area of people not yet wholly in the mainstream whom yet it would be most unfair to class with the backwater, and (2) that sudden conversion and vivid perception are not the only road to Christ and salvation—then we shall be able to go on with the opposing ideas which are never so clear-cut in practice as they are in theory, viz. the ultimate mainstream which is found definitely in Christ, and the backwater which means a definite refusal to follow any kind of light which God reveals to ordinary people.

One could write quite fairly about patriotic and unpatriotic people knowing that one kind was good and the other bad, without being able to discriminate which, on the whole, was which, in the case of multitudes of persons. So if any one of us feels that he is in the brack, neither quite one thing nor the other as yet, there is no need to despair ; but it will help us to see why we should, with all the force at our command, choose the one and avoid the other.

CHAPTER VIII

NEW LIGHT ON OLD SUBJECTS: I. THE CHURCH

WHAT is the ideal of the Church from this point of view? The Church is the company of escaped prisoners who, having escaped through what Christ did, are now joined with Him and with each other in Him, and live in the mainstream. They are out of the backwater and in the mainstream because, by the Spirit's power, they are in Christ, i.e. Mainstream Man, the New Adam. Christ is their Head; and they have fellowship with Him, and—in Him—with each other. A happy band, a comradeship of escaped prisoners, who have done with the world, and are free in Him.

But, oh! do we look like it? Sometimes we look like a lot of old frumps, and at other times we look like a crowd of people who have tied themselves up again by a number of shibboleths and rules.

No rule is any good unless it means the discipline which gives greater freedom; no freedom is any good unless it strives to make other people free. And all this controversy between Chris-

tians, unless it be a grave statement of truth leading to freedom, is so fraught with danger. We concentrate on *minutiae* and forget the mighty truth that in Christ we are free, and, being free, mean to make the whole world free.

I suppose we must have controversy. If a man tells me that Baptism doesn't matter or that you can get on perfectly well without Communion, I am bound to tell him that he misunderstands the Spirit's way of taking us out of the backwater and keeping us, in Christ, out of the backwater. I must sometimes answer loudly for I fear lest he may mislead others.

But one's inner thought ought not to be controversial. I think we should often do better if we stated our case and left it to the Holy Spirit to settle up. Bitterness ; arrogance ; hardness of spirit ; insolence ; despising of others—these are merely traits of the backwater, imported into what should be a mainstream life of love, joy, and peace.

We can, we should, believe that the Church of Christ is the old Israel of God reconstituted in Christ by being taken out of the backwater (in which, nevertheless, it was prepared by prophet and priest and covenant) and incorporated into Himself.

We should believe that, under the controlling influence of the indwelling Spirit, that Society of escaped prisoners was the Church of Christ as known to history, which evolved a Book,

creeds, an Apostolic ministry, and a series of sacramental acts and graces, some definitely of the Gospels, some of Apostolic origin, but all under the one Spirit. That is simply how we see that the Holy Spirit actually acted ; unless we think the Society went wrong from its beginning.

We can always state this, and believe it true. But at times when the Church grew one-sided in its teaching, we can honestly believe that nemesis followed, and irregularities were permitted by God to balance things. Thus the Reformation was probably inevitable, things being what they were.

And if this is so, we can state our case, apologize for our past faults, and wait till the Holy Spirit enlightens us all round ; but at least we must not be bitter, be narrow, for that leads nowhere.

That we should weaken our principles I strenuously deny and resist ; but we mustn't put all the blame on others. The truth is that they will begin to believe our principles when they see that they lead us to the Christ-like life, and to the Christ-like temper.

But the thought I want to leave behind me is that the Church is, ideally, the brotherhood or fellowship of escaped prisoners, who in Christ are in the mainstream. I only wish we all realized it, looked like it, acted like it. When we do, we shall achieve something.

CHAPTER IX

NEW LIGHT ON OLD SUBJECTS: II. THE ATONEMENT

IN this little book the object is to illuminate old and true subjects by a new viewpoint. I don't want to go into details—readers can supply these for themselves. It is only that this additional angle does clear up things so much, that one longs to pass it on.

Let us take the Atonement from this point of view. That Christ is 'Very God of very God' I wholly believe. I cannot, on consideration of all the evidence available, place Him otherwise. But that He was also truly Man—Mainstream Man—I equally believe. There must be no humbug about it. He was true Man; not God playing at being man. He had a task to do and a character to build that only man could do. The Man must live the mainstream life in the backwater; and though He is not backwater man, i.e. sinful and fallen, He is none the less true man, exposed to the same temptations as the original man who swerved aside, plus all the lonelinesses and miseries which mainstream man must feel

when exiled in the backwater among backwater people with their limitations, sins, and unholiness.

His task, then, was to live a mainstream life—faithful to God and unswerving—amid the environment of the backwater ; and then, when it was successfully lived—through work, service, persecution, pain, and death—it would be raised to glory by God and made available for all who wished to share. The mainstream life was lived that it might ultimately be shared by the saved, i.e. those who, in Christ, should, by faith and incorporation, desert the backwater for the mainstream.

The Atonement, then, was the mainstream life lived out, laid down, retaken, and shared for ever At any moment it was an atonement. Every second of it, every detail of it, was the response, in face of the challenge of circumstance, of the mainstream life to be faithful to God and to itself. Or, if you like, it was a faithfulness to itself by being faithful to God.

But in this life lived the climax was obviously the life laid down. Could He hold still when faithfulness meant not only death, that agonizing break up of the whole organism—so alien to a mainstream life—but also the sense of the loss of God, that last agony of the sinner who knows that he has lost God for ever ? He endured much during the ministry, could He endure that ? Would the backwater break down the

faithfulness of the mainstream, when it confronted Him with not only death but dereliction ?

It was the last supreme challenge. He held faithful. No wonder Christendom fastens upon the climax of the atoning life, and calls it the Atonement.

CHAPTER X

NEW LIGHT ON OLD SUBJECTS: III. CHRISTIAN MORALITY

WHEN Christ was on earth He sketched the sort of life which the future mainstreamers would naturally lead—in Him. We find it in the Sermon on the Mount.

It is often incomprehensible to the backwater; one is always being told that it is quite absurd and impossible. To be meek and humble, not to push or to think a lot of ourselves, how contrary this is to the world which worships the 'Big Five' or the 'mailed fist' or the 'man of push and go'! To be pure in heart, to think cleanly, to have one's passions in control and discipline, how impossible, how unnecessary, how limiting! To have any law of inward beauty controlling our love and our desires, how contrary to human nature!

Now people are quite right here. These things are contrary to backwater nature. The world will love its own, its own ways, often its own beastliness. But the Sermon on the Mount is not thinking of backwater morality which at its best is 'playing the game.' The Sermon on the Mount is simply mainstream morality—the inner health

and humility and unselfishness which characterize Christ and His band of escaped prisoners, i.e. mainstream life.

If you are of the backwater your morality will be that of some modern novelists ; if you are of the mainstream your morality will be that of the Sermon It's all quite simple. If you loathe the backwater and are escaped into Christ you will become more and more Christ-like ; you won't even want to live the backwater life.

This greedy rush after money, this undisciplined lust for pleasure, this intrigue with somebody else's wife or husband, this desire to be on top and dominate, this horrid heartlessness which keeps all good things to oneself and makes no effort to share them all round—all these are backwater, true backwater, and increasingly loathesome to all mainstreamers. They become unnatural in time. In the mainstream they don't do these things. They see the result of them, i.e. restlessness, unhappiness, futility ; whereas the Sermon on the Mount when put into application brings love, joy, peace, tranquillity.

To the backwater man, the mainstream morality must seem mad or silly ; to accomplish it from the backwater platform would be an effort of absurdity or impossibility ; but to the mainstreamer it is as simple—in ideal—as swimming is to a swimmer, though it is an impossible task for the non-swimmer.

To live the mainstream life of conduct, i.e.

Christian morality, you must be out of the backwater and in Christ. Then all is possible. Let us take a few instances.

Marriage, to a mainstreamer, is preceded not only by a conversion to Christ and a life lived in Him, but by mainstream discipline. The man and the woman are clean, disciplined. When they marry they give their marriage to their Master, praying that it may not only be happy but useful to God and man. They definitely surrender themselves to Christ in a marriage which means that they love Him and serve Him together instead of apart. They then take life as it comes. Their mutual fidelity and companionship is unbreakable and irreversible because it is mainstream, i.e. in Christ.

Children are a blessing, a gift of God, the result of creative love, and the joy and light of the household.

In that home others are welcome ; there is no desire to enjoy life in selfish isolation. From that home goes out reality, simplicity, loving-kindness. There will be no idle luxury, for luxury kills the soul dead ; but there will be order, comfort, cheerfulness.

The household prays, worships, receives Communion, spreads light and joy wherever it goes, and does what it can to rescue a chaotic world.

That is a mainstream marriage. So dull to the backwater ; so romantic in the mainstream. I think if you compare it to the marriage arrange-

ments of the *Forsyte Saga* or *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* you might concede that it has points. But the difference is in any case fundamental. It is mainstream ; they are backwater.

Or take money. Really the backwater is incomprehensible from the mainstream point of view. People buy their own unhappiness. The vulgarity, the meanness, the cruel inequality, the wastefulness, the unhappiness of unreasonable and inordinate riches is simply patent to all who think.

I once asked an old solicitor eighty years of age, who had dealt with a vast number of very wealthy people, ' Have you ever known great riches and happiness go together ? ' He answered, ' I'd like to think.' And after some time he said, ' No ; I've never known them go together.'

I'm not talking of wealth used for wise purposes and regarded as a trust ; but in the backwater people seem to do anything for money—lie, cheat, oppress, and all for vanity.

The mainstream man will want to be comfortable. Why not ? But money will be a means, not an end. He won't pile up luxuries while half the world is in want. He doesn't, he couldn't. He takes a sober view of money ; he wants some, but not too much. He will never worship it or the people who own it. His soul is set on other things that money can't buy—beauty, kindness, honour, God.

But I think that it is of the utmost importance

that we should see this distinction. Backwater morality is selfishness ; mainstream morality is the Sermon on the Mount—selfishness transcended by the mighty happiness that, in Christ, we are on the way to God, to happiness, to heaven.

Again, I must repeat that as most of us—with the exception of saints—are neither mainstream yet nor willingly backwater, we shall see these things partly and not fully. The Sermon on the Mount is the ideal ; as we grow in conversion we shall begin to see it more clearly. But it is good to see the ideal, and to know how it fits in, even if we are realizing it only painfully and gradually. But at least it will help us to continue trying.

CHAPTER XI

THE CENTRALITY OF CHRIST

THIS conception of man evolving towards God in a mainstream which swerved into a backwater with an intermediate brack of half-and-halfs does change one's thinking in a remarkable way. It gives a sort of biological diagram of life, capable of being expressed either theologically or in terms of evolutionary fact.

It makes it clear as to whence we are swerved aside, as to where we have landed by our swerving, i.e. into the backwater or the brack, and as to the function of the Rescuer Who came to restore us to the mainstream through union with His mainstream life taken, lived, victorious, and sharable. We are saved from loss by union with Christ. That's the root of everything : how He saved us ; what He did ; how we get into union with Him ; that can be stated theologically or biologically—two aspects of one reality.

But in both sides of this picture-thinking the very tremendous fact emerges, the centrality of Christ. It is through Him, and Him alone, that we ultimately get to God.

There are all sorts of people who have never

heard of Him, or who have rejected Him because He is wrongly presented by His evangelists and preachers. If they are honest and seeking light and trying to live up to the highest they see, then who can doubt that they will some day find God. But it will be in Christ. If the purpose of the Father was to send the Son, and the way of the Son was a mainstream life triumphantly lived and ultimately shared so that the voyagers to God found Him in Christ, then that must be true for all.

If that is the Father's way, then it is the one way for all. Those who are saved, although they have never known Him, are saved in Him. It cannot be otherwise, if the mainstream is only recovered and recoverable in Him. So we need not be fearful about them ; He will claim His own, if they have turned their faces to the light they see.

But with us folk who know Him, how satisfying it is to see why it must be so. If He, and He alone, took man's nature and in it built up the new life which we must share to find the Father —as originally intended but frustrated—why, then, to be in Him is the only way ; there is no other. How mankind will learn it I don't know ; perhaps only by continual failure to find peace and power on other lines, till 'Weariness may toss him to My breast.'

But for us who believe in the original purpose of God for man, who know the Fall to be true

because of our own inner experience, who have found, in any degree, the peace and power that come from union with Christ, the Christian scheme of salvation seems so wonderfully to fit the facts of life.

But there is no question of our finding the Father by our own efforts, or without Christ's mediation. Vague desires to find God by the casting up of our thoughts to Him, will be vain unless, in the end, we find our way to Him in and through Christ. Otherwise God's plan of salvation would have been unnecessary—any plan of man's would have been just as good. We can't invent ways to God and pretend that they are as good as God's own revealed way. His way is Christ.

The Father is the End, the Alpha and Omega. But the way to Him is Christ. None could have invented that scheme. It is not of man or invented by man. It is God's revelation. How marvellous it will be when weary man, tired of his own schemes, accepts God's plan and, by surrender to Christ and by a life lived in Him, finds the peace that has evaded him so long. For there is no other way, and no other peace. Christ, very God and very Man, is central.

CHAPTER XII

HOW TO KEEP IN THE MAINSTREAM BY UNION WITH CHRIST

THE entry into Christ out of the backwater is by the two-sided act of surrender and baptism. In our baptism we are grafted into Christ and given something, some power, some grace of incorporation which makes it possible for us to live the mainstream life in Christ. Were we true to our baptismal covenant and grace, using the various means of perseverance, and striving earnestly to be faithful, we should be pure mainstream. As it is, most of us get into the brack; become half converted and half unconverted, so that we are lukewarm like the Laodiceans.

What must we do to be saved? to get rid both of the backwater and the brack? I am convinced that there are three necessities which, if faithfully observed, will bring us increasingly into the full life in Christ. There may be more, but these three appear to be of absolute necessity.

1. The first is a vivid and professional prayer-life. How amateur are the prayers of most of us: a minute or two of something repeated, a mere pin-prick of devotion. No other business could

be made real and effective by such little concentration, far less the great business of a person's life which is to learn and do the will of the Father and to fulfil His purpose and plan.

For any person in earnest, who knows the necessity of escape from the backwater, who knows the vital need of faith in Christ the Rescuer and of life in Him, prayer must take a real solid piece of time. It is hard to specify the exact number of minutes, but I venture the opinion that for any grown-up person a quarter of an hour in the morning—before mingling with the world—is the minimum. And even that is short for serious prayer.

Our prayers should embrace at least these points :

(1) A daily fresh surrender of ourselves and renewal of our baptismal covenant (this involves an inbreathing of the Holy Spirit and a fresh ratifying of our incorporation into Christ).

(2) An approach to the Father, through Christ, when we bring our worship, our thanksgiving, our petitions, our penitence, our intercessions.

(3) A reading of, and meditation over, the Scriptures, especially the Gospels, so as to let the picture of Christ have its real weight and power in our souls.

If this were done each morning, seriously, a quarter of an hour seems so little. Thanksgiving or intercession or worship (the homage of the creature to the Creator) could easily take a quarter

of an hour by themselves. But I put a quarter of an hour so as not to frighten anybody.

But, in any case, prayer should start with surrender. This seems quite vital if the rest of our prayers are to be offered in submission to Christ, and as incorporated with Him. We try to live two lives. A religious life of a prayer or two and a visit to church occasionally and perhaps rather perfunctorily ; a life of the world in which the most vivid interests lie, the world of business, of society, of daily routine and pleasure.

Surrender means a unifying of personality and life so that all the life, all the activities, are brought under Christ by consecration and dedication. So easy to say and so hard to do, except by this vital morning surrender.

I wish I could put into words the vital necessity of this solid piece of time given for the prayer-life every morning, and of a daily surrender as the beginning of it all. The *Veni Creator*—the invocation of the Holy Ghost—our surrender of our whole personality and fortunes to His influence and inspiration, this is the inevitable, the vital beginning.

The Holy Spirit is the Person in God Who touches us first ; we must surrender to His influence first that He may fill us, and put us into Christ (or keep us in Christ), in Whom we approach the Father.

That is the specifically Christian mode of approach to the inner life and love of the God-

head. We can't get to the Father except in the Son, and we can't get into the Son except through and in the Spirit.

Our prayer-life must follow this route ; there is no other Christian route, and the prayers of pagans—if accepted by God—follow this route by unconscious desire. Search the Scriptures and see if it is not so.

But I despair of getting religious power into people—these people who are so disastrously at the mercy of life, of temptation, of any passing desire or pleasure—unless they have a vivid prayer-life. I am almost besieged sometimes by people who say, ' Is there any harm in ? ' ; ' Isn't it natural to ? ' ; ' Am I to miss human natural instincts and pleasures and desires ? ' : and I say, ' Well, what is your standard ? ' and, ' What does it all lead to ? ' and, ' At what end are you aiming ? ' They have no reply ; no standard ; no power. They all seem stragglers without any idea of their goal, nor any sense of direction, and they stray off the path directly they see some attractive flower of pleasure off the road. And unhappiness lies at the end.

A quarter of an hour every morning starting with surrender to the Spirit ; getting linked up with Jesus ; approaching the Father in worship, thanksgiving, petition, and intercession, and sorrow for sin and weakness, would make life altogether different.

If I had advice to give to a parish priest, I

would beg him to look into his people's prayers : there lies the start of everything vital.

2. And the second necessity of continuance in a real spiritual life is Communion. I omit the obvious need of a good Communion, i.e. that we are baptized, confirmed, and absolved if we know how and know our need of absolution from the sins we repent of.

But so much controversy has been made about Holy Communion, that often the simple truth is ignored that in Communion our Lord, by the power of the Spirit, gives His own life to be sacramentally shared by us. The heart of our religion is a life in God, through union with Christ, and in Communion Christ unites us (who are His baptized and, we hope, being-converted people) to Himself by giving us Himself in His own way.

If we really could be bold enough to tell the truth about our Communions we should say, 'I'm going to Communion this morning to let Christ unite His life again to mine.' I always think that each Communion is like a fresh rivet, binding us closer and more firmly to Christ. But, however we picture it to ourselves, if we realize that each Communion binds us afresh to the life of the Saviour Who has redeemed us and is always longing to link us even more closely to Himself, then our Communions will always be real.

3. The third necessity of a vital religion is the one which is far most frequently missed. People

have an idea that they can keep their religion to themselves. It is not possible. Either our religion is fruitful or it dies. They say that the Dead Sea is dead because though water flows into it, there is no outlet. It is a parable. Unless our religion is passed on it grows stagnant and dies.

This is not to say that we must bother or pester every one we meet ; this would be bad manners and futile. But it does mean that we are ready to give to any one whom the Holy Spirit sends to us for help the vision and energy which has been vouchsafed to us. We are always meeting rudderless people ; it is our duty and happiness to give them, as far as we can, the rudder they need. If Christ means everything to us ; if He is our standby, our explanation of life, our source of courage and patience—then unless we pass Him on there is something wrong with our own religion.

In this connection I have come to be quite convinced that no parish or congregation is right unless it has a wheel within the wheel ; a band of people who are ' all-out ' or wanting to be so, who meet every week to pray for the conversion of those around them.

We have one such in Bloemfontein : a Cathedral ' Group ' who meet for an hour on Wednesdays, and pray for the conversion of the diocese, the town, and the congregation as a whole.

To this band—and their leader—I hand over problems to pray about, and odds and ends of people who come to Bloemfontein and know nobody.

These ' strays ' are invited to tennis, are made to feel at home, and get into a society which is definitely religious and believes in prayer. They are invited to the Group meeting, if they care to come, and are introduced to a little fellowship of perfectly open and unabashed Christians.

I find this little band quite indispensable. It is the heart of things ; from it proceed social and religious work, clubs, welfare work, and such-like.

For the ' passing on ' side of religion is not purely theological or evangelical. It must have social, national, and international repercussions. A real Christianity could never be content for a moment with war, or slums, or unreasonable hours or conditions of work. To do all possible for the ' poor,' i.e. the depressed or ill-treated or oppressed, to help the under-dog to a decent and reasonable state of life, is simply Christianity in action.

But if you want to get these things done the unit of action is a band of truly converted people in your parish. They may join in with bigger efforts or organizations, but those organizations will be useless without the Christian determination of individuals and individual groups behind them.

These bands or groups which are being started in South Africa in connection with the parish churches are so effective that I would call the attention of all parish priests to them. You can't manœuvre with a whole congregation. If Mr. Smith and Miss Jones come to Bloemfontein

from Capetown you can't recommend them to a general congregation of five hundred people. But a small group can co-opt them into itself. This small group of thoroughly keen and converted workers, underlying and penetrating the main congregation, seems to me a discovery and necessity of the most supreme importance. Their prayer-time is their power-house. From it spring the religious and social activities which freshen up and change the congregation as a whole.

But the motive behind such a group or fellowship must be unmistakable. It is that selfish, self-contained Christianity is not possible. We hold in order to give. We possess to pass on. And as all real life is in fellowship, then we must create fellowships in order to quicken our own individual religion, and as the effective means by which we can pass on to others, on some real scale, the joy and power of a vital Christianity.

Not to be missionary-hearted, not to pass on the truth we have received to others, is to die oneself. It seems so obvious ; but is it grasped ? Do you find that the average respectable Christian is quietly desirous and keen to pass on the secret to others ? No, you do not. The average respectable Christian is often abominably selfish and grudging. The mission field with its urgent problems, the more obvious field of the unconverted all round them, mean little or nothing.

We ought to realize honestly that if we don't want to convert others, we are not converted

ourselves. Our first awakened cry to Christ is, 'Save our souls,' but the second is, 'Save others' souls.' We never succeed in the first unless we are doing the second. This explains the apathy, the selfish hardness, the awful contentment with our own individual religion, which breaks the heart of the true parish priest. You see it often in Africa when missionary work is mentioned. People are afraid of the native, of his numbers, and his unrealized power. To help the native whom they fear is repellent. To give him the Gospel is uninteresting or obnoxious. You can see it in their faces when missionary work is mentioned. And yet unless we do want to preach the Gospel to every creature our own religion is barren, negative, dead.

And this is always true. If any parish priest was asked, 'Why is your congregation so unresponsive and dead?' the true answer is, 'Because they are not passing on their own conversion.'

You cannot long be converted unless you are, in some real way, converting. That is not known, not realized. So if we want to get out of the backwater into the mainstream of life in Christ we can do it (subject to the fact that He has redeemed us and given us re-entrance into the mainstream by union with Himself) by these three means. There must be a real daily surrender; good Communions; and a definite passing on to others of the freedom and peace which Christ gives to those who belong to Him.

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APPENDIX

PRAYERS OF THE MAINSTREAM[1]

O Holy Spirit of God—
Come into my heart and fill me :
I open the windows of my soul to let Thee in.
I surrender my whole life to Thee :
Come and possess me, fill me with light and truth.
I offer to Thee the one thing I really possess,
My capacity for being filled by Thee.
Of myself I am an unprofitable servant,
An empty vessel.
Fill me so that I may live the life of the Spirit,
The life of Truth and Goodness : the life of Beauty and Love,
The life of Wisdom and Strength.
And guide me to-day in all things :
Guide me to the people I should meet or help :
To the circumstances in which I can best serve God,
Whether by my action, or by my sufferings.
But, above all, make Christ to be formed in me,
That I may dethrone self in my heart
And make Him King.
Bind and cement me to Christ by all Thy ways
Known and unknown :

[1] These prayers are published in leaflet form under the title *Our Daily Prayers* (Mowbrays, ½*d.*).

By holy thoughts, and unseen graces,
And sacramental ties:
So that He is in me, and I in Him,
To-day, and for ever.

O Jesus, my Lord and Master—
I bless and praise Thee because I am in Thee:
I realize that my life is now included in Thine:
I am part of Thee: bound to Thee by the Spirit.
It is no longer I that live to myself,
My life is hid with Thee, and in Thee.
Do Thou speak through me, act through me,
Work through me, suffer in me, die in me,
Rise again in me, and ascend to the Father in me:
Because Thou art in me, and I in Thee.
I remember all Thou hast done for me:
Thy Birth, Thy work, Thy weariness:
Thy love, Thy scourging, Thy Cross and Death:
Thy Resurrection, Thy glory, and Thy salvation offered:
Thy gift of the Church as Thy mystical Body.
For all this I humbly thank Thee, and give to Thee
My worship, my loyalty, my love, my service.
But, above all, I pray Thee, bring me to the Father
That in Thee—the Way—
I may approach Him, and worship Him
In Spirit and in Truth.
For the Father seeketh such
To worship Him.

O Father, Loving and Eternal—
In Christ I worship Thee.
Together with the whole Church, His mystical Body,
I praise, adore, and worship Thee, in Him.

Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord God of Hosts.
Heaven and earth are full of the Majesty of Thy glory.
In the worship, the love, the obedience,
Which Thy dear Son (in the name and nature of Man)
Offered, and offers, to Thee,
I would have my part;
Because, by the power of the Spirit, I am in Him.
By the Sacrifice of His Cross I ask for my forgiveness
And for the forgiveness of the world.
And for all that Thou hast done for Thy Creation
I thank Thee: and for Thy blessings to me and all mankind.
And I pray Thee to bless us, and use us, day by day;
To bless me, and Thy Church, and all men,
And all I love.
And for Christ's sake forgive us all:
Our treacheries and weaknesses: our apathy and neglect,
Our lusts and hardness: our coldness to others.
All we remember of evil done,
All we cannot remember,
Forgive, for Christ's sake. Amen.

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